

A portrait of Toku Konnu
by French photographer
Denis Rouvre. Toku is a
survivor of the tsunami.
This photo was an award
winner in the World Press
2012 exhibition.
www.worldpressphoto.org



Living in the Balance

September 2012

The nightly news frequently makes me want to put my head in the oven, but then hope shows itself in the face of a fourteen-year-old girl from Pittsfield, Maine.

On July 5, the NBC Nightly News closed with a story about fourteen-year-old Julia Bloom. Julia was worried that the girls in her ballet class continually saw themselves as fat, which she declared they were not. So she started a conversation with other girls, and they agreed that part of the problem was the perfect girls portrayed in magazines like *Seventeen*. Julia contended that the models had been air brushed and Photo Shopped into girls that weren't real. She started a blog and an on-line petition, asking *Seventeen* to include "one unaltered photo spread each month.... I want to see regular girls who look like me." The petition garnered 84,000 signatures. *Seventeen* made A Body Image Peace Treaty. Proudly, Julia said, "this started as just a petition and I feel like we've grown into a whole movement."

When I was in high school, I could not wait for the August edition of *Seventeen* to come to the rack of the drug store in the small shopping center near my home. The August edition held all the back-to-school possibilities for a sixteen-year-old living off the hope that one day....yes....one day, I, too would have hair like the Breck girl. That my skin would be as perfect as the Noxzema model. That my eyelashes would be long and beautifully black just like the girl in the Revlon ad. Those *Seventeen* girls had it all, and \$2.50 of my babysitting money would tell me how to make my glossy dreams real.

Then it was *Cosmopolitan*. The shimmery pages of *Cosmo* not only gave me wardrobe and diet advice, but told me how to be a tempting tigress steaming with sex and sizzle.

And the messages kept coming. When I turned fifty, *AARP* Magazine assured me that as a senior I could still look great. Fat liposuctioned. Eyelids lifted. Spider veins dissolved. Just waiting on me and my credit card.

Jungian analyst Marion Woodman expressed joy about women entering, what she calls, the crone phase of their lives. But her female readers rose up in horror, telling her how offensive the word "crone" is. When people hear the word crone, they usually think of a used up hag who is one step from brewing wing of bat and eye of newt. Yet Woodman describes crones as women of age with the gift of wisdom. Women who can hear with the heart. Who listen and nurture others into becoming fully and wholly who they are. Who recognize that real beauty lies within, at the core, no matter what the age.

I've known some of my women friends for decades. When I sit across the table at lunch and look at their faces, I am reminded why I love them. The gentle lines around their eyes and mouths tell me of lives lived. Of knowing sorrow and joy and wisdom and wonder. I see crone goddess.

It is difficult to acknowledge my cellulite and the crow's feet and the ten pounds that now anchor my once flat middle. But with aging, there is a part of me that has been freed. An authenticity that is blooming. And while a surgical eyelift may smooth some wrinkles, to be genuine and true to my core, the crone work focuses on developing the inner eye. The soul's eye.

Julia Bloom started a conversation with her peers about girls...real girls. She doesn't want to be glossed over. I would like those same kinds of conversations with women about our crone years. To see the crone as goddess, not hag, and to seek ways to embrace and claim her spirit as our own. ©Wanda Meade

I learned the
truth at 17
that love was
meant for
beauty
queens.....

Janis Jan



Calendar considerations.....

Marcus Borg

Speaking at First Congregational Church, Hendersonville, NC

September 14, 15 and 16

For more information and to register

<http://www.fcchendersonville.org/files/LectureSeriesOnlinePDF.pdf>

Anderson School of Theology for Laypersons

Dr. James Carroll – Sunday, September 30, at 3:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. at Boulevard Baptist Church, Anderson SC (This is a correction to the location for the lectures!)

The Pre-Lecture Symposium on The Future of Progressive Theology will be held on Saturday, September 29, 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. at Boulevard Baptist Church in Anderson, SC. Dr. Carroll will present the keynote lecture on Saturday morning as part of this symposium. Other Saturday presenters are Dr. Jerry Wright and Dr. Fred Plumer.

To attend the Saturday Symposium, you must register!

Go to <http://astlonline.org>

Southern Dharma Retreats, Hot Springs, North Carolina

Seeing Clearly: The Heart of Vipassana Practice, September 8 –13

Answering the Call to Love, September 27 – 30

The Power of Presence: A Metta Retreat, October 5 – 10

For more information contact Carol Meyer at southerndharma@earthlink.net

Save the Date! Dream Conference

Friday Evening, November 9, and Saturday, November 10

First Baptist Church, Greenville, SC

A Mini Course on Wisdom with Cynthia Bourgeault

Saturday, October 13

Cathedral of All Souls, Asheville, NC

For more information, contact Robbin Whittington at robbin@allsoulscathedral.org

<http://thecsr.org/event/2012-zabriskie-learning-series-presents-a-mini-course-on-wisdom/>

Spirituality and Practice

Practicing Spirituality with Parker Palmer. E-course September 4 through October 13

Engaging Hope with Br. David Steindl-Rast. E-course September 10 through October 5

www.spiritualityandpractice.com

Mountain Top Lectures

Dr. Brian McLaren

November 9 and 10

Amicalola Falls Lodge, Dawsonville, Georgia





Calendar considerations.....

Welcoming Prayer Retreat

October 5 – 7

St. Francis Springs Prayer Center, Stoneville, NC

For more information contact Robin Britt at cbritt@triad.rr.com

Rabbi Rami Shapiro

“Biblical Wisdom for Post-Biblical Times: Learning to Read the Bible like a Mystic”

October 12 – 14

The Episcopal Convent of Saint Helena, Augusta, Georgia

For more information <http://www.osh.org>

(Rabbi Shapiro writes a monthly column for Spirituality and Health Magazine and is the author of numerous books.)

Lansing Lee Conference with Eric Metaxas

October 28 – 30

Kanuga, Hendersonville SC

For more information www.kanuga.org

2012 Lake Junaluska Peace Conference, Love in Action: The Transformative Power of Nonviolence

November 8 – 11, 2012

2011 Nobel Peace Prize winner, Ms. Leymah Gbowee will headline the conference.

www.lakejunaluska.com

Advanced Centering Prayer Retreat

Becky Hannah, facilitating

Sunday, November 25 – Sunday, December 2

Valle Crucis Retreat Center, Valle Crucis, NC

www.highsouth.com/vallecrucis/

Looking into 2013!

Transforming Trauma: Contemplative Approaches to Spiritual Healing, Friday, April 12, 9:30 – 12:30 p.m.

Led by James Finley at St. Michael Archangel Catholic Church, Cary, NC

Through the Narrow Gate, a silent retreat led by James Finley who will let the mystic teachings from Christianity, Buddhism and other traditions be the guides.

Friday, April 12 at 5:00 p.m. until Sunday, April 14 at noon.

St. Francis Springs Prayer Center, Stoneville, NC.

<http://jamesfinleynorthcarolina.org>

Abbey of the Arts

On-line courses for the fall....

Women at the Threshold: The Wild Heart Longing – dates to be announced

Way of the Monk, Path of the Artist, September 3 – November 25

Live It to Give It: Soul Nourishment and Self Care – dates to be announced.

For more information <http://abbeyofthearts.com>





About Spiritual Direction —

- Offers a space and time for you to explore, reflect upon, and deepen your relationship with God.
- Provides a haven from the daily busyness of the outer world and opens a time to be still and to reflect on your inner journey.
- Is a companioning relationship grounded in dialogue and discernment.
- Explores ways you may integrate spirituality into your daily life.
- Is not limited to any one spiritual practice or tradition.
- May involve one or two meetings or multiple meetings over time.

You may wish to consider spiritual companioning if you are —

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- Looking for a place to dialogue about spiritual questions
- Seeking ways to connect with the Spirit in a more intentional way
- Discerning ways to live in a more integrated and whole way
- Standing at a crossroads in your life
- Exploring new or fresh ways to be in relationship with God

For more information about Spiritual Direction, please feel free to contact me by phone
864-246-3960 or via email at wmeade@meadellc.com

Wanda Meade, M.Ed., Licensed Professional Counselor
Completed Haden Institute in Spiritual Direction Program
PO Box 14940
Greenville, SC 29610



None of the photos in this month's journal are mine. The school photo is third grade.....the pearls add a lot to the hairdo, I think. The photo at the bottom of page two is my maternal grandmother. On page three, the photo of the woman in the hat is my paternal grandmother who lived with my family from the time I was born until she died when I was 30. She was truly my first and dearest crone. The women hugging my brother and me were my mother's crones when she moved to Washington, DC as a young woman. These women were part of the network of older women who mentored young women like my mom and helped them navigate the world. The fourth page....me and my mom and me and my paternal grandmother. Thanks to all these wonderful women.....